



**GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING FREQUENCY OF INTERNAL  
 QUALITY SYSTEM AUDITS**

**Purpose**

This appendix establishes guidelines to be used by the Internal Review Specialist in determining the frequency of internal audits for the Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch’s Quality Management System.

**Policy**

The MGC Branch reviews quality management systems in each location where service is provided based on factors which contribute to the relative potential for nonconformance. Locations with highly technical, complex operations, as well as those with a history of nonconformance, are audited at least annually. Less complex systems are reviewed at least every 1 to 2 years. The Internal Review Specialist also considers the relative proximity of plants when arranging the internal audit schedule to ensure cost-effective reviews. The relationship between factors determining the frequency of internal audits is demonstrated in the table below.

<b>RANKING FACTORS</b>	<b>AUDIT MORE FREQUENTLY</b>	<b>AUDIT LESS FREQUENTLY</b>
Past Performance	History of severe nonconformances. No audit history. New applicant.	Good past narrative reports.
Operation Complexity	Complex systems. Multiple graders. Multiple items. 2-3 shifts. Large number and type of documents.	Single shift. One grader. Single item. Grading only. Limited document preparation.
Production Volume	High volume. High speed. Many lots.	Low volume. Slow operation. Few lots.
Service Frequency	Daily service. Full-time commitments.	Part time service. Shared commitments.

- Note:**
1. Systems should be in place for at least 3 months before the first audit for new applicants.
  2. Follow up audits are scheduled by the Internal Review Specialist based on the severity of the nonconformance and the nature of the proposed corrective and preventive action.

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